

15 January 1974

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director of Central Intelligence

SUBJECT : Overseas Press Club of America, Inc.

Mr. Lawrence Stessin, program chairman of the Overseas Press Club, has replied by phone to my letter of 7 January. He made the following points:

Their "Shop Talk" sessions are held twice a month from March through June. People in the news and/or fellow professionals appear. Harrison Salisbury recently told how the *Times*' op-ed page started and functions. The *Times*' Mrs. Curtis will talk soon about the problems of women reporters.

About 150-200 people usually show up. I imagine foreigners are also present as guests. The speaker talks for about 20-25 minutes, very informally. Q&A follows. The thing lasts about 1-1/2 - 2 hours.

Mr. Stessin said he thought the forum would give you an opportunity to tell all the things that CIA does as the clearing house and focus of information available to the U.S. Government as well as discuss CIA-and-press relations. He said most newspapermen, as do most citizens, have the James Bond idea of CIA.

I would - He said although the "Shop Talk" sessions have never produced news stories, as they are not off-the-record, there is no guarantee that they would not.

He said the sessions were very lively; journalism students from Columbia spice up the atmosphere (!).

Mr. Stessin said that questions posed by the OPC crowd were not likely to be any deeper than those put to a speaker at any Rotary meeting. I am not convinced that it is all that tame, myself.


F: I-1

MORI/CDF

Good answer

I told Stessin you were inclined to be more and more responsive to the press and had been so here on a background basis. I added that I doubted very much that you would want to wet your feet in public speaking in the "Shop Talk" forum. I said that once you appeared somewhere publicly, I would raise the question with you again and it is possible you might decide to accept their kind invitation at a later date.

STAT


Angus MacLean Thuermer
Assistant to the Director